

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00
NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03
IO-13 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02 ACDA-12
CU-04 MCT-01 AF-10 COME-00 STR-05 INT-05 OES-07
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O R 221559Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WADHDC IMMEDIATE 9478
AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 9645

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, MILI, IS, GT, CS, MX
SUBJECT: KATZIR VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA, ISRAELI-MEXICAN RELATIONS

REF: A. MEXICO 17485; B. 76 MEXICO 1234; C. 76 MEXICO 3003

SUMMARY: ISRAELI PRESIDENT KATZIR'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO MEXICO
REFLECTS THE GENERAL IMPROVEMTN IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES IN RECENT YEARS. THE BITTERNESS ABOUT
MEXICO'S VOTE ON THE ZIONISM RESOLUTION IN THE UN IN 1975
AND THE RESULTING JEWISH BOYCOTT OF MEXICO HAVE NOW BEEN
PUT IN THE PAST. IT IS ALSO A REFLECTION OF THE POTENTIAL
IMPORTANCE TO ISRAEL OF IMPORTS FROM MEXICO. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT EPHRAIM KATZIR DEPARTED LAST EVENING
(NOVEMBER 21) FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO MEXICO, COSTA
RICA, AND GUATEMALA. HE IS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE
AND 4 PERSONAL ADVISORS, INCLUDING JACOB BARMORE,
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THE DIRECTOR OF THE MFA MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICAN
DIVISION. A GOVERNMENT PRESS BULLETIN ISSUED NOVEMBER
20 STATED THAT KATZIR PLANS TO MEET WITH PRESIDENTS,
STATESMEN AND SCIENTISTS, AND JEWISH COMMUNITY REP-
RESENTATIVES IN THE HOST COUNTRIES. UPON HIS DEPARTURE,
PRESIDENT KATZIR MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: "IN
MY DISCUSSIONS, I HOPE TO BRING NEWS FROM ISRAEL AND

TO SPEAK OF ITS ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS, AS WELL AS OF ITS YEARNING FOR PEACE. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THIS VISIT WILL STRENGTHEN THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP WHICH MEXICO, COSTA RICA, AND GUATEMALA ALREADY HAVE WITH ISRAEL, AND THAT IT WILL ENCOURAGE GREATER ECONOMIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND CULTURAL COOPERATION TO THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF ALL."

2. ACCORDING TO BARMORE, THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT IS ESSENTIALLY CEREMONIAL AND IS A RETURN VISIT FOR PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S VISIT TO ISRAEL IN 1975. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS HAVE COMMENTED THAT KATZIR WILL BE THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO MEXICO AND THAT THE TRIP COMES AT A TIME WHEN, ACCORDING TO ISRAELI AMBASSADOR SHAUL ROSOLIO, RELATIONS ARE VERY GOOD. ROSOLIO IS ALSO QUOTED AS SAYING THAT MEXICO, DUE TO ITS SIZE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN THE REGION, IS IMPORTANT TO ISRAEL AND THAT THERE IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCHANGE BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS, NOT THE LEAST IMPORTANT OF WHICH IS OIL.

3. IN DISCUSSING THE TRIP WITH JORGE CARRANZA OF THE MEXICAN EMBASSY, HE MADE THE POINT THAT THE VISIT WAS MORE THAN JUST CEREMONIAL, THAT IT REFLECTED THE IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN MEXICO AND ISRAEL. CARRANZA FEELS THAT THE VISIT IS ANOTHER

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STEP IN THE REBUILDING OF GOOD RELATIONS, FOLLOWING THE PATTERN OF ALLON'S VISIT TO MEXICO LAST YEAR (REFTEL C), MK YISRAEL GALILI'S ENCOURAGING MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO IN DECEMBER 1976, AND THE VISIT TO ISRAEL LAST MONTH BY LOPEZ PORTILLO'S SON.

4. THAT VISIT CULMINATED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BINATIONAL COMMISSION TO DEAL WITH ALL BILATERAL AND COMMERCIAL EXCHANGES. SUCH A COMMISSION WAS FIRST PROPOSED BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, BUT IT WAS SIDETRACKED BY MEXICO'S ZIONISM VOTE IN THE UN. THE FACT THAT THE COMMISSION HAS NOW BEEN ESTABLISHED IS IN ITSELF AN INDICATOR THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE IMPROVING AND ARE EMERGING FROM AN ERA OF CONTENTION OVER MEXICAN VOTING IN THE UN, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PLO OFFICE IN MEXICO CITY, THE GOM STATEMENT AFTER THE ENTEBBE OPERATION WHICH CRITICIZED BOTH THE HI-JACKING AND ISRAEL'S RESPONSE TO IT IN VIOLATION OF THE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF UGANDA, AND THE JEWISH FINANCIAL AND TRAVEL BOYCOTT OF MEXICO.

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E 5. CARRANZA FELT THAT THE IMPROVEMENT WAS INITIATED BY MEXICAN NATIONAL INTERESTS AND FOR NO LONGER PRESSURING MEXICO ON UN VOTES (AS IN THE CASE OF THE RECENT VOTE ON THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION ON SETTLEMENTS). HE ALSO POINTED TO THE FACT THAT THE MEXICAN AMBASSADOR IS READILY ALLOWED PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH DAYAN, IN SPITE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S NORMAL PROCEDURE OF MEETING GROUPS OF AMBASSADORS ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHIC ZONES, AND SAID THE MEXICAN EMBASSY IS RECEIVING MORE THAN FAIR TREATMENT AND IN FACT IS FARING BETTER THAN IT HAD UNDER THE ALIGNMENT GOVERNMENT.

6. CARRANZA SAID THAT MEXICO IS HOPEFUL THAT THE VISIT WILL LEAD TO AN EXPANSION OF ISRAEL'S MODEST TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN MEXICO. MEXICO IS ALSO ANXIOUS TO FINALIZE AN AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH AN ARAVA AIR-CRAFT PLANT AND IS RELYING ON IT TO HELP WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE YUCUTAN. MEXICAN CONCERNS ARE
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HEIGHTENED BY THE FACT THAT PANAMANIAN PRESIDENT TORRIJOS,

IN HIS RECENT SWING THROUGH ISRAEL, BROUGHT UP THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PLANT BE LOCATED IN PANAMA. MEXICO WOULD LIKE AN EXTENSIVE TECHNICAL AGREEMENT ON THE ORDER OF THE BORAD CULTURAL AGREEMENT SIGNED IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR.

7. COMMENT: WITH THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE ZIONISM VOTE FINALLY BEING LAID TO REST, IT SEEMS FROM HERE THAT RELATIONS COULD WELL BE ENTERING A BETTER STAGE, WITH THE GOI NOW WILLING TO SUBORDINATE UN VOTES TO MEANINGFUL EXCHANGES. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE DIFFICULTIES AROSE IN PART BECAUSE OF THE BROAD FOREIGN POLICY AMBITIONS AND PERSONAL ASPIRATIONS OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, WHOSE HIGH PROFILE IN THIRD WORLD AND MULTILATERAL FORA AND OPINIONS ABOUT THE ME LED HIM INTO CONFLICT WITH ISRAEL. THE FEELINGS TOWARD LOPEZ PORTILLO APPEAR TO BE GOOD AND THE ISRAELIS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE TWO NATIONS ARE NOW OFF THEIR COLLISION COURSE. KATZIR'S MEETINGS WITH JEWISH REPRESENTATIVES WILL HAVE THE UNMENTIONED OBJECTIVE OF ELICITING SUPPORT OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY WHICH, ALTHOUGH SMALL (50,000) IS INFLUENTIAL AND INCLUDES MANY BUSINESSMEN AND PROFESSORS. THE ISRAELIS HOPE TO REALIZE THE POTENTIAL OF THIS NUCLEUS OF BUSINESSMEN AS A CATALYST TO ENCOURAGE TRADE OR AT LEAST TO PROMOTE JOINT VENTURES AND MARKETING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CONCERNS AND ENTERPRISES. IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS PROBABLY HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER EACH PARTNER; ISRAELIS CAN BENEFIT FROM AIRCRAFT SALES (ISRAEL HAS ALREADY SOLD ARAVAS TO MEXICO) AND POTENTIAL FOR TRADE. MEXICO NEED ISRAELI TECHNOLOGICAL AND AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST IN DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES. FOR ISRAEL, THE ABILITY TO PURCHASE PETROLEUM

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FROM MEXICO IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THEIR OVERALL POLICY OF DIVERSIFYING THEIR SOURCES OF SUPPLY. AS MEXICO'S PETROLEUM RESERVES INCREASE THIS RELATIONSHIP BECOMES MORE IMPORTANT. THIS DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO IMPORT PETROLEUM FROM MEXICO ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO ISRAELI DESIRES TO OVERCOME THE ILL WILL CAUSED BY THE ZIONISM RESOLUTION PROBLEM.

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